

# The Challenge to Write –Dangerous and Disruptive Words

138

views



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This seminar engages with emerging debates around the value and danger of writing as a creative experience, and what forms of writing are valued and supported within 21st century teaching and research. Janice brings together examples of the creative works and reflections written by pre-service teachers as novice authors over a three year period, and reflections on the experience of researchers as writers using qualitative methods in a climate of neo-positivism. She suggests that writing that is audacious, troubling and creative supports powerful thinking and has the power to disrupt our personal and professional habitus as artists, educators, and researchers.

## Transcript

- 1. The Challenge to Write –Dangerous and Disruptive Words Dr Janice K. Jones 28 May 2014 PLACE Seminar: Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge
- [2.](#) Acknowledgement of Country I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands where my teaching and research is conducted: the Gaibal, Jarowair, Ugarapul and Butchulla peoples of Queensland. I honour the wisdom of Elders past, present and future, seeking to walk together in the spirit of reconciliation.
- [3.](#) Power and Mystery: Weaving Words “At the heart of all imaginative writing – and all writing makes demands on the imagination to a certain extent – is a mystery: whatever it is that the writer is trying to reach or touch in herself/himself in the process of writing.” Lesley Saunders (2014)
- [4.](#) Place and Position – This Study • Writing in education: the territory of ideas - broader social, educational and political contexts • Writing in research: challenging parameters, politics and practices • Context and people: the researcher, the students, the academics, and the experience • Writing directions – performative, aesthetic and reflective writing futures?
- [5.](#) ...in a world full of the noise of militancy – aims, targets, impact, wars on low standards, and all the rest of the battle-talk and derring-do – the ability to be open and stilled, to practise the interior disciplines of the imagination and to convey these things to young people by example as well as by precept, might be what the moral purpose of education looks and sounds like.... imaginative writing is not only not a

luxury, but is integral to the enactment of human existential, aesthetic and ethical values. Lesley Saunders (2014) Territory of Ideas

- [6.](#) Context and People: Behind the Numbers Year Mode Enrol Year Domestic/Int'n l Nil response/ Rejected Agreed to publish 2011 On campus 25 4 (17) 3 (7) 2 (1) 25 Dom Nil: 8 Reject: 3 14 Web 25 5 (2) 4 (16) 3 (7) 25 Dom Nil: 21 Reject: 3 1 2012 On campus 13 4 (9) 3 (3) 1 (1) 13 Dom Nil: 8 Reject: 4 1 Web 41 4 (25) 3 (11) 2 (1) 1 (2) 39 Dom Nil: 26 Reject: 8 5 2013 Web 43 4 (24) 3 (15) 2 (2) 1 (2) 41 Aus 2 Intn'l Nil: 34 Reject: 4 5
- [7.](#) The Issues - Vision • Teaching writing in schools - risk-averse approaches ( Myhill & Wilson, 2013), and the potentially limiting impact of 'playing safe'(p.101) • But...Stephanie Norgate Poetry and Voice: A Book of Essays (2012) • Teachers 'becoming' writers "develop the self as writer and through writing, and to open up a performative space" (Stephen & Muriel, 2013, p. 215) where social learning may support critical pedagogy.
- [8.](#) Not a book, but....
- [9.](#) The Warp.... Lesley Saunders Nita Temmerman Janice K. Jones Yvonne S. Findlay Anne Jasman Donna Moodie Erin Christensen Benjamin Williams Joseph Occino Robyn Henderson Patrick A. Danaher Alison L. Black Roberta E. Harreveld Patrick Blessinger
- [10.](#) The Weft Jenny Hoang Renee Lockwood Miyuki Kruse Pauline Dobbie Jaclyn Fitzgerald Sophie Fitzgerald Nicole Hargreaves Erin-Pearl Buchner Melissa Andrews Melissa Crawford Cameron Feith Nicole Hobson Kirra O'Brien Leanne Hubbert Catherine Somerfield Julia Grieve Claire D'Arcy Lorrae Charles Kathleen Parkes Natalie Romanet Pauline Dobbie Kim Fox Natalie Kersnovske Jenny Hoang Tommy Ha Melanie Harris Matthew Hunt John Mulroney Stephanie Rex
- [11.](#) ...and the space between As the reader engages with the fabric of the text the reader brings experience to interpreting, connecting ideas, making meaning... Reading back and forth through the text, s/he becomes a silent or 'third author', making meaning between what is presented, and in the spaces between.
- [12.](#) Beliefs Challenged • It is 'so much easier to write for children' than for adults • Writing in schools is something 'children do', not something the teacher does with students • 'Millennial' students technologies and writing....? • Teaching writing involves explicit instruction, keeping children on-task, skilful time and resource management and assessment and reporting of performance
- [13.](#) Performative - Reflective? • Writing 'outward' – as a performative act • Telling stories to others • Imagining new ways of presenting and re- presenting experience • Connecting with others • Writing 'inward' – as a reflective act • Telling stories to ourselves • Re-imagining the meanings of experience • Connecting with self, history and the land
- [14.](#) The Challenge to Write.... The need to say something 'important' I wanted to ensure the readers were able to develop an understanding of life on the land. Renee Locke "...he grudgingly pulled on his high top work boots and headed for his truck stopping only to hear the calves desperate calls coming from the cattle yards as they searched for their mothers. Yesterday he had to sell each and every one of his heifers to help buy more feed and pay the increasing bills which lay unopened on the kitchen table. Driving out of the house paddock and into the hills, Tom scanned the barren landscape only to see brown grass and the image of two wedge tail eagles in the distance."
- [15.](#) Tensions: Disclosure and Privacy • James Williams, a professor of Rhetoric and Linguistics expressed his concerns about the risks of "writing from the self" in teacher

education courses. • I have not had much to do with short stories or poems since high school so felt very overwhelmed. One thing I found difficult was my closeness to my writing. This made me feel quite vulnerable: my writing seemed to be a window into my soul for everyone to see. This made it difficult for me to share my work with others and receive feedback on my writing. Natalie Kersnovske

- [16.](#) Miyuki Kruse chooses a topic... This process brought me a painful memory of loss of my grandfather who recently passed away. It was too emotional and too painful to dig deeper, so I had to stop thinking about my grandfather. I rested a few days to search for another topic; however the same memory, emotion, feeling and vision of my grandfather and his country kept popping up in my head...I could see, smell, feel, almost touch and hear as if I was standing right in the middle of the country.
- [17.](#) ...and writes • Please refer to resource 1 • Miyuki's poem is presented as it evolves over three stages • She considers that "Freedom of choice can give the power to the writer to create a personally meaningful piece".
- [18.](#) "Working with pen and paper allowed me to write and rewrite, to cross words out and to scribble ideas all over the page. I felt more creative using these tools than when I worked on a computer..."
- [19.](#) Jaclyn Fitzgerald Reflects ...a challenging and, at times, emotionally overwhelming experience. Also....thoroughly rewarding and empowering ...I have developed a sense of renewed strength. I am reminded of the power of the written word to heal, transform and reveal individuals as they explore, revisit and appreciate traumatic experiences, and of the nurture writing can provide. Like my future students, our unique histories have, do and will continue to define us as they are moulded, shaped and re-shaped, much like the writing itself.
- [20.](#) Beside By Jaclyn Fitzgerald And so she knelt beside him and placed his hand upon her heart He felt its ache and traced a finger from eye to chin, sweeping her salty tears- Come back to me, she whispered, and disappeared, returning to her own dream sleep in a distant place. And so he knelt beside her and placed her hand upon his heart She felt its warmth and traced a tear from Tuesday to Wednesday and saw his love at a smile's edge- "I'm here", he whispered, "I'm always here".
- [21.](#) Becoming Teachers of Writing Challenges: The desire to complete all elements of the planned lesson meant that the writing task could not be completed and the fast movement from one activity to another limited students' development of new learning or their consolidation of existing learning. This pattern is noted regularly by inspectors ((Office for Standards in Education Children's Services and Skills, 2012, p. 13
- [22.](#) Support for writers • Pre-service teachers sought: • Time in which to think about and choose a topic and approach that suited their interest and personal preferences. • No pressure to share works at any stage. • A safe and supportive space in which to learn from others, and where work could be shared if and when the writer felt ready. • Timely, tactful and useful feedback. • Positive encouragement at all points of the process, and particularly on the first sharing of a draft. • Being respected and treated as an individual (open choice of topic, language, genre, language, mode of presentation).
- [23.](#) ...and with young learners? • A year 5 student: One on one sessions took place during the students (sic) lunch break and she would also write drafts at home as extra part of her homework. These sessions ran two days a week for the two weeks leading up to the NAPLAN test. This enabled the student to have a fresh mind when taking part in the testing.

- [24.](#) The joy of writing? Once we had worked through the features and the structure of persuasive text we could then move on to writing. Instead of jumping ahead and starting writing first, I urged the student to write the graphic organiser. At first she struggled, stating that she had not used an organiser before, but once I explained what was required of her she effectively completed the organiser. Once the student had completed the organizer we went back through it together making sure she had included everything required and fixed up any spelling and grammatical mistakes....I then encouraged the student to use the organizer to assist her in completing her rough draft. Once the student had completed her draft I then marked it, noting down any points that needed improvement
- [25.](#) New Understandings – Beyond Habitus • Many teacher-writers created unique and relational spaces within which they and learners co-operated as writers • Dialogic and negotiated processes • Teacher as co-learner “We also looked at other examples of comics and manga, looking at the various ways they utilised the panels to illustrate time. We found that diagonal panels give an action-feel to the visual flow..” (Jenny Hoang with Tommy Ha)
- [26.](#) Thinking like a young writer... • To the student, the areas which I had highlighted for her did not seem incorrect and my explanations were sometimes too complicated for her. Even young children love writing poetry and enjoying the sound of the poems they have created being read aloud. (Melanie Harris) • When writing my own poem I had prepared many drafts and picked them apart, practicing how to write. That was a light bulb moment for me. For Lisa to write her poem describing how she feels and thinks about roses...first we looked at different objects with a magnifying glass. I asked Lisa to consider what else could the object be? What did it remind her of? What could you use a rose for if you were an insect? What does it feel like? (Natalie Kersnovske)
- [27.](#) Finding new paths • Instead of a “didactic introductory phase; my intent is to capture attention and excitement...tacking pinwheels of different sizes and colours to the board and having them all spinning as the students walked in certainly made teaching the subject of ‘Forces’ a lot more fun!” (Kim Fox) • To write a play which leads to the experience of performing...allow more of a connection with the script and perhaps for students who felt the same difficulty in writing as I did would benefit from seeing their scripts “come to life” (Melanie Harris)
- [28.](#) Researchers as Writers • Co-authoring texts – a fine negotiation of agency and position • How do co-authors manage the back and forward dance of creating a single and persuasive piece from their respective positions? • Writing with Yvonne Findlay – Disclosure and Privacy.
- [29.](#) Voices in Research • The institutionalisation of what counts in twenty-first century education research filters, concentrates, professionalises and circumscribes teacher- writer researcher conduct (Foucault, 2010/, 1980: 195-196). • The bureaucratic apparatus that names and controls what counts as this research, and thus work of teacher-writer researchers continues to proliferate (Lee, Goodyear, Seddon & Renshaw, 2011).
- [30.](#) ...and our voices? Discussion

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